



BRITAIN AND THE WAR:

A Study in Diplomacy

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PREFATORY NOTE.

The following publications and books have been consulted in the preparation of this pamphlet:—

(1) "Great Britain and the European Crisis." (The Penny White Paper.)

(2) "Why We are at War." (Clarendon Press. 2s.) This convenient book sets out the German and Russian Papers.

(3) Parliamentary Debates, 1911-1914.

(4) Belgian Grey Paper.

(5) *The Manchester Guardian*. September 10th, 11th, and 14th, in which the Russian Orange Book is also translated.

(6) *Daily News*, August 26th, and *The Times*, August 27th, in which are published the télégrams dealing with French neutrality.

(7) Collected Edition of John Bright's Speeches, edited by Thorold Rogers.

(8) "Hidden Causes of the Franco-Prussian War," by Emile Ollivier.

(9) "The Conference at Algeciras," by M. Tardieu (in French).

(10) "Russia Against India," by A. R. Colquhoun (1907).

(11) "Common Sense in Foreign Policy," by Sir Harry Johnston.

(12) "Wars and Capitalism," by P. Kropotkin. (1902).

And others of a more general character.

C. H. NORMAN

October, 1914.

BRITAIN AND THE WAR:

A Study in Diplomacy.

I.

AUSTRIA, SERBIA, RUSSIA, AND GERMANY.

The first step in the tragedy, which was so rapidly unfolded before the astounded peoples of Europe in July last, was taken by Austria in October, 1908, when it was announced that the Austrian Protectorate over Bosnia and Herzegovina had become a formal occupation. The cause of this action was the Young Turk Revolution in Turkey, as a result of which the Powers, who had divided among themselves certain portions of the Turkish Empire, feared that Turkey might be induced to challenge the proceedings under which partial dismemberment of her Empire had taken place.

The Servian Government, at that time just emerging from the discredit into which the horrible circumstances connected with the murder of King Milan and Queen Draga had enveloped it, protested against this conduct of the Austro-Hungarian Government, on the ground that the interests of Serbia in Bosnia were greater than those of Austria, and that Austria had been permitted in Bosnia by Europe only as a trustee; so that the annexation was a breach of trust. Public opinion in Europe, generally speaking, pronounced itself decidedly against the excuses of Austria, as it was clear that the abrupt destruction of the *status quo* in the Balkans, at a time when Turkey was in an internal ferment, might gravely imperil the future peace of Europe.

On March 31st, 1909, Serbia made the following declaration to the Austrian Government: "Serbia declares that she is not affected in her rights by the situation established in Bosnia, and that she will therefore adapt herself to the decisions which the Powers are going to arrive at. . . . By following the counsels of the Powers, Serbia binds herself to cease the attitude of protest and resistance which she has assumed since last October, relative to the annexation, and she binds herself further to change the direction of her present policy towards Austria-Hungary, and in the future to live with the latter in friendly and neighbourly relations."* The charge brought against the Servian Government by Austria has been that that solemn undertaking was not adhered to in any way. The German Chancellor, in a confidential note to the German Governments dated 28th July, put the Austro-German point of view in this way: "The agitation conducted by the Pan-Slavs"—that is the Servian Party—"in Austria-Hungary has for its goal, with the destruction of the Austro-

*"Why we are at War," p. 144.

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Hungarian monarchy, the scattering or weakening of the Triple Alliance with a complete isolation of the German Empire in consequence. Our own interest, therefore, calls us to the side of Austria."* On that date, Germany knew that the policy initiated by King Edward of isolating Germany was being completed; and that there was a combination of Russia, France, and Britain, possibly Japan, all actuated by a suspicious spirit towards the policy of Germany.

In 1911 came the European crisis over the Morocco Question, when Germany, faced by a combination of Russia, France, Britain, and Spain, sustained a disastrous diplomatic check. That fact undoubtedly much exasperated opinion in Germany, as it was a further confirmation of the fixed idea that there was a tacit understanding to undermine her influence at every point. That this was so was apparently felt by Sir Edward Grey, whose anti-German policy has been such a potent cause of the terrible catastrophe now being analysed, for he telegraphed to the British Ambassador in Berlin on July 30th, 1914, in these remarkable terms: "If the peace of Europe can be preserved, and the present crisis safely passed, my own endeavour will be to promote some arrangement to which Germany could be a party, by which she could be assured that no aggressive or hostile policy would be pursued against her or her allies by France, Russia, and ourselves, jointly or separately."† That repentance was too late; but those words cast a bright light upon the errors of the past.

In 1912 the first Balkan War broke out, in which Turkey was severely handled by a combination of Bulgaria, Greece, Serbia, and Montenegro. On May 26th, 1913, peace was concluded between Turkey and the allied combination. On June 30th, Bulgaria was attacked by Greece, Serbia, and Roumania, and had to surrender much of what she had won. This internecine conflict led to much bitterness between the Balkan States. The Austrian Government exhibited some anxiety at the territorial accessions secured by Serbia in these two wars, especially as the Pan-Serb agitation in Bosnia had become very active. A threatening tone was adopted by the Austrian Government and Press towards the Servian Government, an attitude which much irritated the Russian Government. What ensued is well summarised in the Annual Register for 1913: "In foreign politics the greatest achievement of Germany this year was the prevention of a European War, which would in all probability have broken out if the Emperor William had not plainly declared on the one hand to Austria-Hungary that he would not support her should she be involved in a war with Russia as the consequence of an attack by her upon Serbia, and on the other to Russia that if she attacked Austria-Hungary, notwithstanding her abstinence from active intervention in the Balkans, he would fight by the side of his

*"Why we are at War," p. 162.

†"Great Britain and European Crisis," Document 101. p. 77.

Austrian ally." That stand was effective, and the crisis of 1913 was safely passed.

On June 28th, 1914, the Archduke Francis Ferdinand, heir to the Austrian Emperor, and his Consort, were murdered at the City of Sarejevo, the capital of Bosnia. The incidents connected with the crime were most startling. Three different attempts were made on the part of the assassins, at separate places, within a short period of time. The murder was seemingly anticipated in several cities—notably London, Belgrade, St. Petersburg, and Rome. In view of the extraordinary line now being taken by certain members of His Majesty's Government with regard to Austria, it is worth while to recall the references of the Foreign Secretary and the Prime Minister of Britain to that assassination. Sir E. Grey said, on the 29th June, in the House of Commons: "I was one of those who less than a year ago saw the pleasure that was given here by the visit to the King of the Archduke Francis Ferdinand and his Consort. I knew the goodwill which the Archduke personally expressed towards our country during his visit and the pleasure which he so obviously felt in that visit." Mr. Asquith, in moving an address of condolence to the Emperor of Austria, used this language, which was either unreal, or mocking, in view of the proceedings of the Government since: "We are once more confronted with one of those incredible crimes which almost make us despair of the progress of mankind. . . . The Emperor and his people have always been our friends, and in the name of the Commons, of the nation, of this United Kingdom, we respectfully tender to him, and to the great family of nations of which he is the venerable and venerated head, our heartfelt and our most affectionate sympathy." Yet, *within six weeks of the utterance of these sentiments*, Britain had drifted into war with Austria-Hungary, against which country no one has pretended that Britain has any legitimate ground of complaint!

Faced with this terrible loss, the Austrian Emperor directed that a secret inquiry should be begun into the plot which had led to the murder. The conclusions arrived at at that inquiry have thus been set forth by the Austrian Government: "(1) The plan to murder the Archduke during his stay in Sarajevo was conceived in Belgrade by Gabrilo Princip, Nedeljko, Gabrinowic, and a certain Milan Ciganowic and Trifko Grabez, with the aid of Major Voja Tankosic. (2) The six bombs and four Browning pistols which were used by the criminals were obtained by Milan Ciganowic and Major Tankosic, and presented to Princip Gabrinowic in Belgrade. (3) The bombs are hand grenades, manufactured at the arsenal of the Servian Army in Kragujevac. (4) To insure the success of the assassination, Milan Ciganowic instructed Princip Gabrinowic in the use of grenades and gave instructions in shooting with Browning pistols to Princip Grabez in a forest near the target practice field of Topshider (outside Belgrade). (5) In order to enable the crossing of the frontier of

Bosnia by Princip Gabrinowic and Grabez, and the smuggling of their arms, a secret system of transportation was organised by Ciganowic. The entry of the criminals with their arms into Bosnia and Herzegovina was effected by the frontier captains of Shabatz and Loznica, with the aid of several other persons."* It has been complained against the Austrian Government that the evidence on which these findings were founded was not published.† That complaint is open to four observations: (1) The Austrian Government might not have desired to reveal the full ramifications of the conspiracy, until it was known who had inspired it, because the above findings were only directed against the agents of the conspiracy as distinguished from its authors. (2) It is not the practice in Austria-Hungary, and in that respect Austria is like many other Continental countries, to conduct preliminary inquiries into political crimes in public. (3) Austria was much aggrieved by the crime. The pride of the Hapsburgs is notorious; and this was an occasion when any comment on their actions would be regarded as an affront. (4) Servia maintained all the while a position of masterly inactivity.

The murder took place on the 28th June, but it was not until July 23rd that Austria presented a stiff ultimatum demanding certain reparation from Servia. The Austrian Ambassador in London offered some explanation of the strong terms of that ultimatum in these remarks, as recorded by Sir E. Grey: "Count Mensdorff said that if Servia, in the interval that had elapsed since the murder of the Archduke, had voluntarily instituted an inquiry on her own territory, all this might have been avoided."‡ As a matter of fact, Servia had done nothing, conduct which led the Kaiser to telegraph with some justifiable asperity to the Czar: "The spirit which made the Servians murder their own King and his Consort still dominates that country."§ It is fair to remember, too, that the real criminals in connection with the Archduke's assassination have not been brought to justice yet.

The Austrian ultimatum created some indignation in Russia; and it is at this point that the sinister designs of Russia begin to appear. Servia appealed to the Czar for his protection, in the meantime presenting a conciliatory reply to the Austrian Government. It is probable that the reply would have been accepted by Austria, had not the Servian Government so often broken its pledges, given in 1909, to live "in neighbourly and friendly relations" with Austria.

The vital point of the Austrian ultimatum, namely that Austrian officers should watch the inquiry to be held by Servia so as to see that it was a genuine one, was rejected by Servia as an interference with her integrity as a sovereign state. A deadlock was thus reached, as Austria was unwilling to forego this

*"Why we are at War," pp. 148-149.

†The Foreign Office has now disclosed that the evidence was received by Britain on the 7th August.

‡"Great Britain and the European Crisis," Document 3, p. 2.

§"Why we are at War," p. 170.

demand and submit her case to an international tribunal, where Serbia, whom she was accusing of carrying on a murderous propaganda, would have presented herself as an equal of Austria. The attitude of Austria was, undoubtedly, a harsh and unbending one in the beginning; but, before condemning Austria too severely, Britons should ask themselves this question: Supposing the Prince of Wales had been murdered in Germany, and the inquiry showed a connection of German officials with the murderers, that knowing this the German Government did nothing, would the statesmen of Britain have submitted such a matter to the Hague Tribunal? It may be that they ought to have done so in a democratic community; but does any reasonable man think that the Government would have taken such a course? The British Ambassador at Vienna thus diagnosed public feeling in Austria in his despatch on the rupture of diplomatic relations: "The demeanour of the people at Vienna showed plainly the popularity of the idea of war with Serbia, and there can be no doubt that the small body of Austrian and Hungarian statesmen by whom this momentous step was adopted rightly gauged the sense of the people. . . . The country certainly believed that it had before it only the alternative of subduing Serbia or of submitting sooner or later to mutilation at her hands."* On July 23rd, the British Ambassador at Rome reported: "Secretary-General took the view that the gravity of the situation lay in the conviction of the Austro-Hungarian Government that it was absolutely necessary for their prestige, after many disillusion in the Balkans, to score a definite success."† The Austrian Government, under pressure from the Russian and German Governments, declared its intention of not seeking any territorial compensation at the expense of Serbia. Then, on 26th July, the German Ambassador at St. Petersburg wired to the German Chancellor: "The Austro-Hungarian Ambassador had an extended interview with Sazonoff this afternoon. Both parties had a satisfactory impression, as they told me afterwards. The assurance of the Ambassador that Austria-Hungary had no idea of conquest, but wished to obtain peace at last at her frontiers, greatly pacified the Secretary."‡ On 28th July, Austria-Hungary declared war on Serbia. The British Ambassador at Vienna comments: "The inevitable consequence ensued. Russia replied to a partial Austrian mobilisation and declaration of war against Serbia by a partial Russian mobilisation against Austria."§ Here must be inserted two telegrams which tell most heavily against the good faith of Russia. On July 26th, the Russian Minister for Foreign Affairs sent this extraordinary telegram to the Russian Ambassador at Rome: "Italy could play an all-important rôle in the preservation of peace if she could use her influence in Austria and bind

* "Great Britain and the European Crisis," p. 115.

† "Great Britain and the European Crisis," Document 38, p. 30.

‡ "Why we are at War," p. 164.

§ "Great Britain and the European Crisis," p. 116.

herself to a neutral attitude in the conflict since it cannot remain localised. It would be desirable for you to say that it is impossible for Russia not to give help to Serbia.”§ What could that mean but that Russia had decided to kindle a general conflagration? Austria had pledged her honour not to take Servian territory. If she broke her word, then would have been the moment for Russia to call Austria to account. That Russia and Serbia were playing a dubious game is confirmed by this frank admission of the Czar, on the 30th July. “The military measures now taking form were decided upon *five days ago*, and for the reason of defence against the preparations of Austria.”* That is to say, Russia had decided on mobilisation on the 25th July—three days before Austria had declared war on Serbia! What reason of defence was there in this act? As the Kaiser telegraphed on the 31st July to the Czar: “Nobody threatens the honour and power of Russia, which could well have waited for the result of my mediation.”† The Russian mobilisation was grossly provocative, and was a primal cause of the catastrophe which has befallen Europe; because that mobilisation terrified the German Government, which could not understand the motive of Russia in shielding Serbia from the wrath of Austria, in the peculiar circumstances surrounding the murder at Sarajevo.‡ The counsel Germany could tender to Austria was weakened by the fact that the intervention of Germany against Austria in 1913, which averted war, had not improved the relations between Austria and Serbia, but had produced the assassination; as Serbia imagined, with some justice as events turned out, that the politics of assassination were not viewed unfavourably in Russia. It was not until 1st August, as the British Ambassador at Vienna states, that Austria replied to the Russian move. “General mobilisation of army and fleet,” is the the laconic message. On the same date it is noted by Sir E. Grey: “The Austro-Hungarian Ambassador declared the readiness of his Government to discuss the substance of the Austrian ultimatum to Serbia.”¶ But the Russian mobilisation did not cease. Germany asked that it should be stopped; and no answer was returned. The German representatives were telegraphing that France and Russia were pressing on with their mobilisation; and Sir E. Grey had already informed the Austrian Ambassador that the British Fleet would be kept together, as the situation was difficult.|| It is known now that transports were being collected

§ Russian Orange Book, *Manchester Guardian*, September 10, 1910.

* This statement of the Czar does not accord with a telegram from Sazonoff to the Berlin Ambassador on 28th July: “The Imperial Government will announce to-morrow (29th) the mobilisation in certain districts.” Sazonoff was obviously trying to mislead the German Government. The Foreign Office introduction to the Penny Book, “Great Britain and European Crisis,” states “Russia ordered a partial mobilisation on the 29th July.” The Czar’s telegram is quite inconsistent with that. “Why we are at War,” p. 172.

† “Why we are at War,” p. 139.

‡ The Kaiser, in a telegram to the Czar on the 29th July, urged: “I think that it is possible for Russia to maintain the rôle of a spectator of the Austro-Servian War without dragging Europe into the most awful war that it has ever experienced.”

¶ “Great Britain and the European Crisis,” p. 98.

|| “Great Britain and the European Crisis,” p. 43.

together in the mouth of the Thames on the 31st July. Faced with this crisis, Germany lost her nerve, and mobilised her forces late on the 31st July. On the same date, the German Ambassador in Paris was instructed: "Please ask French Government whether it intends to remain neutral in a Russo-German War."* He answered on 1st August: "Upon my repeated definite inquiry whether France would remain neutral in the event of a Russo-German war, the Prime Minister declared that France would do that which her interests dictated."†

II.

BRITAIN, BELGIUM, FRANCE, AND GERMANY.

The second part of this drama may be said to open at the peaceful town of Andover, in Hampshire, where a certain Captain Faber, M.P., delivered a speech in the month of November, 1911. He informed his audience that "he was not going to gloss over or pass over anything, and he was going to dwell on the late crisis in the European situation. That crisis was brought about over the state of Morocco, and the crisis between France and Germany was exceedingly grave, and at that time there was a division in the Cabinet as to whether we should stick to France or not. He knew the names of the men who wanted to stick to France in the Cabinet and the names of those who did not. The names of the men who decided to honourably stick to France were Mr. Lloyd George and Mr. Winston Churchill. Those two men were in favour of sticking to and abiding by the treaty with France. . . . The idea at the time of the late stress was to send six divisions of regular troops to help our ally, France." (*Andover Times*, 16th November, 1911).

That speech naturally caused a stir in political circles by reason of its positive and grave assertions. On 16th November, 1911, Mr. Primrose asked Sir E. Grey whether "he will state what are our engagements with foreign Powers involving armed intervention or support." The reply by Sir E. Grey was: "All treaties concluded by H.M. Government since 1898 and engagements with foreign Powers that might involve armed intervention have been laid before Parliament." On the 27th November, 1911, Sir C. Kinloch-Cooke inquired whether the Declaration between France and Great Britain as to Morocco, signed on 8th April, 1904, was interpreted by either the French or British Governments "to mean and to include military and naval support under any and what circumstances"? Mr. Acland answered: "An agreement to afford diplomatic support does not impose on any Power an obligation, either to give or to withhold military or naval support." On the same date, Sir E. Grey delivered a speech in which he remarked: "Let us try to put

* "Why we are at War, p. 173.

† *Ibid.*, p. 174.

an end to some of the suspicions with regard to secrecy. We have laid before the House of Commons the secret articles of the Agreement with France in 1904. There are no other engagements. . . . No British Government could embark upon a war without public opinion behind it, and such engagements as there are which really commit Parliament to anything of that kind are contained in treaties or agreements which have been laid before the House. For ourselves, we have not made a single secret article of any kind since we came into office." Such was the position in 1911. In his fatal speech of the 3rd August, 1914, Sir E. Grey read the following document, technically known as an *aide-memoire*, which he had written to the French Ambassador in London on 22nd November, 1912: "My dear Ambassador,—From time to time in recent years the French and British naval and military experts have consulted together. It has always been understood that such consultation does not restrict the freedom of either Government to decide at any future time whether or not to assist the other by armed force. We have agreed that consultation between experts is not and ought not to be regarded as an engagement that commits either Government to action in a contingency that has not yet arisen and may never arise. The disposition, for instance, of the French and British Fleets respectively at the present moment is not based upon an engagement to co-operate in war. You have, however, pointed out that, if either Government had grave reason to expect an unprovoked attack by a third Power, it might become essential to know whether it could, in that event, depend upon the armed assistance of the other." Then comes the operative part, in which was an undertaking of the highest importance: "*I agree that, if either Government had grave reason to expect an unprovoked attack by a third Power, or something that threatened the general peace*" (just observe how far-reaching those words might become in certain eventualities) "*it should immediately discuss with the other whether both Governments should act together to prevent aggression and to preserve peace, and, if so, what measures they would be prepared to take in common.*" Between two private individuals an instrument so worded would be regarded as a contract in terms as well as in honour. Yet Sir Edward Grey admitted, in the same speech, that he did not know what the outcome of such a bargain might be, because he continued: "We are not parties to the Franco-Russian Alliance. *We do not even know the terms of that Alliance.*" That is a confession of incompetence, because no such letter should have been given to the French Ambassador until disclosure had been permitted of the obligations of France towards Russia.

Reports emanating from Paris soon began to circulate alleging the existence of this document. In February, 1913, Lord Hugh Cecil, in the debate on the Address, pointed out: "There is a very general belief that this country is under an obligation,

not a Treaty obligation, but an obligation arising out of an assurance given by the Ministry in the course of diplomatic negotiations, to send a very large armed force out of this country to operate in Europe." Mr. Asquith intervened at once, saying: "I ought to say that it is not true." How can that denial be reconciled with the contents of the letter addressed to the Ambassador? On 24th March, 1913, the Prime Minister was again questioned: "Whether the foreign policy of this country is at the present time unhampered by any treaties, agreements, or obligations under which British military forces would, in certain eventualities, be called upon to be landed on the Continent?" Mr. Asquith replied: "As has been repeatedly stated, 'this country is not under any obligation, *not public and known to Parliament, which compels it to take part in any war.*'" That answer was an untruth. On the 28th April, 1914, more rumours on the subject being current, Sir Edward Grey was further interrogated: "Whether the policy of this country still remained one of freedom from all obligations to engage in military operations on the Continent?" He answered: "The position now remains the same as was stated by the Prime Minister in answer to a question on 24th March, 1913." That was a most disingenuous and tricky reply. In May, 1914, there was a discussion in the Russian Duma on the relations between Britain and Russia. That topic was debated in secret, and Sir Edward Grey has declined to publish the British Ambassador's report as to what transpired in that debate; but, on the 11th June, 1914, Sir Edward Grey was asked: "Whether any naval agreement had been recently entered into between Russia and Great Britain, and whether any negotiations with a view to a naval agreement have recently taken place or are now pending between Russia and Great Britain." The Foreign Secretary dealt with the question in a most elaborate and formal manner: "The Prime Minister replied last year to the question of the Hon. Member that if a war arose between European Powers there were no unpublished agreements *which would hamper or restrict the freedom of the Government or of Parliament to decide whether or not Great Britain should participate in a war.* That answer covers both questions on the Paper. *It remains as true to-day as it was a year ago.* No negotiations have since been concluded with any Power that would make the statement less true. No such negotiations are in progress, and none are likely to be entered upon as far as I can judge." All this time Sir Edward Grey had in his possession a copy of the letter he had written himself to M. Cambon that committed Britain to every kind of Continental adventure into which Russia might drag France. The concluding sentence of this statement of Sir Edward Grey, in the circumstances, is a masterpiece of misrepresentation: "But if any agreement were to be concluded that made it necessary to withdraw or modify the Prime Minister's statement of last year which

I have quoted, it ought, in my opinion, to be, and I suppose that it would be, laid before Parliament." That is the mental state of the Prime Minister and the Foreign Secretary, whose appeals to heaven and to national honour read a little strangely in view of the falsity of their representations to Parliament, the custodian of national honour. It is a curious commentary upon these repudiations that the American Press, on June 20, 1914, *before the assassination at Sarajevo*, published a report that a naval convention had been signed between Russia and Britain under which, in the case of a Russo-German war, Britain would render assistance to Russia by naval operations. It is right to add that Sir Edward Grey has strenuously contradicted that report; but the reader must judge what value he will attach to contradictions emanating from Sir Edward Grey.

The position of Belgium must next engage our attention. It has been reiterated that Britain is fighting in this war because there was some treaty under which the neutrality of Belgium was guaranteed in a European war. Neither the Prime Minister nor Sir Edward Grey has enlightened the world as to the text of that guarantee. The present writer has been through Hertslet's "Map of Europe by Treaty," and has failed to discover any such instrument. The Treaties of 1831 and 1839 contain merely this: "Article VII.: Belgium shall form an independent and perpetually neutral State. It shall be bound to observe such neutrality towards all other States." That is a common form stipulation which is always inserted on the creation of small buffer States like Belgium. There is also the fact that on 9th August, 1870, Great Britain and Prussia entered upon a treaty "relative to the independence and neutrality of Belgium." Article I. of that Treaty pledged Prussia to respect the neutrality of Belgium during the Franco-Prussian War. Article II. provided for joint measures against France should France violate the territories of Belgium. Article III. provided that the Treaty should only be binding on the High Contracting Parties during the Franco-Prussia War. "On the expiration of that time the independence and neutrality of Belgium will, so far as the High Contracting Parties are respectively concerned, continue to rest as heretofore on Article I. of the Quintuple Treaty of the 19th April, 1839." Sir E. Hertslet has a note that that Treaty is No. 183 in his book. Article I. of that document simply says: "H.M. the King of the Netherlands engages to cause to be immediately converted into a Treaty with H.M. the King of the Belgians, the Articles annexed to the present Act. and agreed upon by common consent, under the auspices of the Courts of Great Britain, Austria, France, Prussia, and Russia." That the neutrality of Belgium doctrine is more complicated than the problem of the Danish Duchies, reputed as the most abstruse question known in the history of diplomacy, is the only determination that one can arrive at from the documents; and it is

criminal that Britain should have been plunged into a European War on a pretext of this character.* Britain owed one duty to Belgium; and that is a duty which does not seem to have been performed, namely, to give Belgium sound advice. Britain had never guaranteed to protect the neutrality of Belgium during a Continental War for the excellent reason that the guarantee was impossible of performance. The neutrality of Belgium could only be upheld by force of arms. Belgium should have been warned by Britain that it was unlikely that the British troops could be brought to Belgium in time to render the Belgian forces any assistance; and that it was improbable that the French Army, owing to its general state of disorganisation, could promptly aid the Belgian troops. If that counsel were given by Britain, and still Belgium was willing to risk a conflict against Germany's overwhelming strength, then Belgium has her own Government to thank for the devastation which has been wrought in her territories. If Britain and France led the Belgians to believe that the French and English troops would effect a junction with the Belgian Army outside Brussels, then Belgium has been the catspaw of Britain and France; because no military officer of repute has ever contended that it was possible to defend Belgium from German invasion ever since Germany constructed the network of strategical railways which runs to the Belgian frontier. It may be that King Albert of Belgium was actuated by ambition, and that Belgium is to be rewarded at the expense of Luxemburg, in which case the transaction is even more scandalous. Had Belgium surrendered to *force majeure*, insisting on substantial compensation for the trespass committed by the German troops, no one could have doubted her wisdom, nor suspected her honour.

As already demonstrated, Germany attempted to get some statement from France concerning the latter's attitude in a Russo-German war, but without result. The next move by Germany was to ascertain the intentions of Britain. The Emperor had some ground for hoping that Britain would remain neutral, as he had prevented a European coalition against Britain in 1900-1901 to compel Britain to give terms to the Boers. The Kaiser, in 1908, had allowed an interview to be published in *The Daily Telegraph*, which was summarised in the Annual Register. "He (the Emperor William) had proved his friendship for England by refusing to receive the Boer delegates at Berlin, while the European peoples had received and fêted them; *by refusing the invitation of France and Russia to join with them in calling upon*

* Mr. Gladstone, speaking on 10th August, 1870, said: "There is, I admit, the obligation of the Treaty. It is not necessary, nor would time permit me, to enter into the complicated question of the nature of the obligations of that Treaty, but I am not able to subscribe to the doctrine of those who have held in this House that the simple fact of the existence of a guarantee is binding on every party to it irrespectively altogether of the position in which it may find itself when the occasion for acting on the guarantee arises." He had previously observed: "It is said that if Belgium were in the hands of a hostile Power the liberties of this country would not be worth 24 hours' purchase. I protest against that statement. A statement more exaggerated, a statement more extravagant, I never heard fall from the lips of any member of this House." Our alarmists might keep that in mind.

England to put an end to the Boer War; and by sending to Windsor a plan of campaign against the Boers in December, 1899, drawn up by himself, and submitted to his general staff for criticism, which ran very much on the same lines as that which was adopted by Lord Roberts." Neither the French nor Russian Governments ventured to contradict this account, which was amplified in the debates in the Reichstag. Finding war with France was inevitable, the German Chancellor made overtures to Britain which, by some misuse of language, have been described as infamous. What the German Chancellor offered, according to Sir E. Goschen, was to guarantee the territorial integrity of France if Germany were successful in defeating Russia and France, which was a remote contingency. There may be some hidden wickedness in this suggestion, but the present writer can only see that it was a business proposal. Sir Edward Grey rejected this proposition. Then Prince Lichnowsky put forward a second basis, as Sir Edward Grey wired on August 1. "*He asked me whether, if Germany gave a promise not to violate Belgian neutrality we would engage to remain neutral. I replied that I could not say that; our hands were still free, and we were considering what our attitude should be. All I could say was that our attitude would be determined largely by public opinion here, and that the neutrality of Belgium would appeal very strongly to public opinion here. I did not think that we could give a promise of neutrality on that condition alone.*" The Ambassador pressed me as to whether I could formulate conditions on which we would remain neutral. *He even suggested that the integrity of France and her Colonies might be guaranteed. I said that I felt obliged to refuse definitely any promise to remain neutral on similar terms, and I could only say that we must keep our hands free.*"* Sir Edward Grey has since contended that Prince Lichnowsky was not authorised to negotiate on this basis and was being deceived by his superiors in Berlin. That argument is founded upon the unshakeable conviction in Sir Edward Grey's mind that Germany was intending to fight the world all at once. That is rather ridiculous, considering that the hopeless nature of such a conflict would restrain any Power from embarking upon it. On the 2nd August Sir Edward Grey handed M. Cambon this memorandum: "I am authorised to give an assurance that, if the German Fleet comes into the Channel or through the North Sea to undertake hostile operations against French coasts or shipping the British Fleet will give all the protection in its power. This assurance must not be taken as binding H.M. Government to take any action until the above contingency of action by the German Fleet takes place."† That was an extraordinary communication which, as Germany and France were at war, amounted to a declaration of

*"Great Britain and the European Crisis," Document 123, p. 99.

†"Great Britain and the European Crisis," Document 148, p. 105.

hostility against Germany; it was an act of war by Britain against Germany long before Belgian territory had been entered by the German troops. Had the German Navy steamed into the North Sea on 2nd August it would have been liable to destruction by the British Fleet (*though Britain and Germany were still negotiating*), in accordance with the assurance presented to the French Ambassador. It was an ingenious scheme, but hardly of a nature to warrant the high moral tone since taken against Germany by the British Ministers! On August 1st, Prince Lichnowsky telegraphed to Berlin: "Sir E. Grey has just called me to the telephone and asked whether I thought I could say that in the event of France remaining neutral in a Russo-German War we should not attack the French. I told him I thought I could accept the responsibility for this."* The Imperial Chancellor replied: "Germany is ready to take up the English proposal if England guarantees with her forces the absolute neutrality of France in a Russo-German conflict. . . . We promise that the French frontier shall not be passed by our troops before 7 p.m. on Monday, August 3rd, if England's consent is given in the meantime."† France, however, was determined to support Russia; so that that proposal fell through. If France had remained neutral, Belgium would have been saved much misery, and France and Britain much blood and treasure. Sir Edward Grey should have warned France more sternly of the consequences of involving her fortunes in a struggle between Slav and Teuton.‡ Also he should never have committed Britain in 1912 to a blind support of France, without acquainting the Cabinet with his ignorance of the terms of the Franco-Russian Alliance. The document of 1912 should have been disclosed to the British Parliament at the time of dispatch; because, then, the German statesmen would have known how desperate the situation might become. Sir Edward Grey laid a snare for the House of Commons, out of which, in the excited condition of public opinion and the electrical atmosphere in Europe, the House could not be extricated with honour and dignity. Without reading or disclosing the last-quoted telegrams to Parliament, Sir Edward Grey had the effrontery to tell the House of Commons on the 3rd August: "We have disclosed our mind to the House of Commons. We have disclosed the issue and the information which we have." He had these documents in his possession but concealed them; nor have they been published in the White Paper. The Kaiser himself wired to King George: "If France offers me her neutrality, which must be guaranteed by the English Army and Navy, I will, of course, cease to consider an attack on France, and use my troops in another direction. I hope that France will not be nervous. The troops on my frontier are being held back by

*The Times, August 27, 1914.

†The Times, August 27, 1914.

‡On 29th July Sir E. Grey expressed to M. Cambon his opinion that Britain had no interest in the supremacy of Slav or Teuton in the Balkans, which is the origin of this war.

telegram and telephone from passing the French frontier.”* King George replied that there had been a misunderstanding, and that negotiations could not proceed on those lines: and war ensued. Germany had lost some valuable hours and had endeavoured to keep France and Britain out of war, knowing that her best chance of success was in France, as Russia was almost invulnerable to invasion. Yet the Jingo Party in Britain would impute the whole blame for this cruel war to the artful manœuvres of the Kaiser. That is a supposition which rests upon the absurd assumption that Germany would risk a war with Russia, France, Britain, and Belgium at the same moment! There is some element of truth in the comments of Herr von Jagow, as recorded by the British Ambassador at Berlin: “Herr von Jagow expressed his poignant regret at the crumbling of his entire policy, and that of the Chancellor, which had been to make friends with Great Britain, and then, through Great Britain, to get closer to France.”† The Chancellor expressed himself more strongly: “What we had done was unthinkable; it was like striking a man from behind while he was fighting for life against two assailants. He held Great Britain responsible for all the terrible events that might happen.”‡ After all, Britons should reflect that it would have been very unpleasant had Germany joined a European Coalition on behalf of the Boers. Germany, no doubt, refused to do so in her own interests, as the Kaiser did not believe that it was to the advantage of Germany that Britain should be crippled by a European Coalition. It is, unfortunately, the present writer’s view that the same observation is applicable to the situation of to-day; and that Britain never entered upon a more insane campaign than this campaign in which she is helping to destroy Germany in the interests of Russia and France.

On the 3rd August the British Minister at Brussels wired the following information: “French Government have offered through their Military Attaché the support of five French Army Corps to the Belgian Government. Following reply has been received to-day: “We are sincerely grateful to the French Government for offering eventual support. *In the actual circumstances, however, we do not propose to appeal to the guarantee of the Powers.* Belgian Government will decide later on the action which they may think it necessary to take.”§ Up till that late hour, the Belgian Government was seemingly willing to adopt an attitude of enforced neutrality, as Belgium could not hope permanently to contest the march of the German Army. On August 4th, the King of the Belgians addressed an appeal to King George which is thus worded: “I make a supreme appeal to the diplomatic intervention of your Majesty’s Government to safeguard the integrity of Belgium.”¶ The mystery of Belgium

*The Times, August 27, 1914, The Daily News, August 26, 1914.

†“Great Britain and the European Crisis,” p. 111.

‡Ibid, p 111.

§Ibid, p 106.

¶Ibid, p 153.

is almost insoluble on these documents as that is a telegram inviting only *diplomatic intervention*, and not *armed intervention*, to preserve *not* the neutrality of Belgium, but the integrity of Belgium. The German Government, according to Sir Edward Grey, had delivered a note to Belgium, "proposing friendly neutrality, entailing free passage through Belgian territory, and promising to maintain the independence and integrity of the kingdom and its possessions at the conclusion of peace, threatening, in case of refusal, to treat Belgium as an enemy."* On August 4th, Sir Edward Grey wired to the British Minister at Brussels: "You should inform Belgian Government that if pressure is applied to them by Germany to induce them to depart from neutrality, His Majesty's Government expect that they will resist by any means in their power."† It was a terribly selfish act to press that advice upon Belgium, when no substantial assistance, in the military sense, could be rendered to save Belgian territories from devastation.

III.

GENERAL OBSERVATIONS.

It may be asked: "Well, but granted all this criticism is sound, what can be done now?" That is a question often put by those persons who explain that Britain "must go through with it." Surely one is entitled to know "To what end is this policy directed?" The Prime Minister, Mr. Churchill, and Mr. Lloyd George, in their recruiting orations, have introduced a lot of irrelevant and prejudicial matters; but on *that* principal point on which more information is needed their silence has been unanimous and complete. The Prime Minister has explained that Britain is fighting for Belgian neutrality. One cannot fight for a myth. Belgian neutrality vanished the moment the first German patrol crossed the frontier. His next argument was that German militarism must be crushed. Well, can it be done? The militarism of Germany has this excuse, that it has proved itself a fairly efficient weapon against a powerful combination. In these days, it is questionable whether a well-organised composite European State can be thoroughly beaten. Britain had enough trouble to subjugate the small Boer Republics in South Africa. The partition of Germany and Austria-Hungary may be the motive of the Czar; but what benefit can accrue to Britain or France from such madness? Before Germany and Austria surrender to Russia, millions of men will have died, as many of the races in Austria and Germany must literally strive to their last man against Russian control. That is the common-sense of the situation. Moreover, there is a certain amount of humbug in this outcry against German militarism. In the centuries before German unity was accomplished, Berlin was more often in the hands of a foreign invader than any other capital

*"Great Britain and the European Crisis," p. 153.

†Ibid, Document 155, p. 108.

in Europe. Bismarck calculated that the French had occupied Berlin over twenty times, while the German troops had been in Paris twice. Prussia and Brandenburg were two of the most invaded countries in Europe before the ring of bayonets was welded together. That is historical fact. On the other hand, Russia has a militarist propaganda of the most evil kind; and the Dreyfus case demonstrated what form French militarism could assume. Nor is British navalism innocuous in its spirit! Through that navalism, Britain has assailed nation after nation in Europe that has threatened her trade supremacy; and Germany, the latest comer, is being similarly handled. "On the knee, you dog!" was a phrase that rang unpleasantly through England not long ago. The militarism of Lord Kitchener in Egypt and in India was as bad as anything one could want in that line. Mr. Asquith, in his orations about Britain struggling for the liberties of Europe, might re-assure us about the restoration of the statutory British liberties which have been whittled away in the past two months by a series of Royal Proclamations.

In 1899, Britain was righteously engaged in the destruction of "Krugerism"; to-day it is "Kaiserism" which is the target of Britain's virtuous indignation. By an ironic stroke of Fate, this year (1914) was the scene of the greatest procession ever organised by British Trade Unionism, when hundreds of thousands of men protested against the deportation of Englishmen without trial or without charge by the successors of "Krugerism." "Krugerism" never deported British subjects without trial and without charge; but "Kaiserism" did resist the importation of Chinese "blackleg" labour. The disappearance of "Krugerism" was rather a barren victory; it certainly was an expensive one. Many wonderful things were forecasted as likely to occur under the British *régimé* in South Africa; but the world still awaits something newer than the old tyranny of capitalism.

Another argument for the war is that the principle of the freedom of nationalities is involved. On which side? Germany and Austria have been promised partition by the genial Czar and the witty Frenchman! In the past twelve years, there have been five States whose independence has been taken from them without any protest from Britain. They were all examples where the nationalities were distinct. The Transvaal and the Orange Free State had their independence destroyed by Britain. Persian integrity was broken into by the thieves' covenant of 1907 between Russia and Britain; and Mr. Morgan Schuster, the American who was re-organising Persian financial administration, was expelled through Russo-British intrigue. Morocco was partitioned between France and Spain with British connivance. The case of Corea was almost parallel to that of Belgium. The independence and neutrality of Corea were guaranteed by Japan, Russia, Britain, and France, under a number of Treaties. The Corean Queen was foully murdered by Japanese agents. The

Japanese, some time afterwards, invaded Corea and compelled the Coreans to fight against Russia in the Russo-Japanese War. Russia and Corea protested to Britain and France; but, on that occasion, which was a far more shameless breach in international law, Britain and France thought it convenient to forget their "obligations of honour," "their written bond," "their sacred covenant," or whatever high-sounding phrase may occur to the recruiting orators of the Cabinet! Corea was annexed by the Japanese, and has regretted her unhappy fate ever since. The Germans were not parties to any of these touching incidents in the War of Liberation on behalf of small nationalities; probably, because they were elbowed out by the Triple Entente. Mr. Asquith and Sir Edward Grey, by the way, were the two prominent Liberal leaders who deserted Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman when the latter was endeavouring to obtain some undertaking that the independence of the Orange Free State would be preserved. The sudden affection for principle exhibited by Mr. Asquith nowadays is somewhat unconvincing when compared with past events in his life.

Ah! but it will be proclaimed, "What about the German atrocities and the road-hog of Europe?" That is the only topic that the Government has really left; and it is a strange defence for a war which ought never to have been undertaken. Undoubtedly some terrible crimes have been perpetrated by the German soldiery; but as the worst crime under most penal codes is "Thou shalt not kill," can one be astonished that the authorisation to large bodies of men to commit the capital offence should bring in its train all the lesser crimes of rape, arson, mutilation, etc.? Once the passions are unloosed, and war *does* unloose the worst and most deeply ingrained passion of all, to wit, the desire to slay, it is silly to complain about the excesses that will follow. The burning of Louvain, Malines, Rheims, are artistic calamities; but they are specks compared with the spectacle of ten millions of men slaughtering each other seven days a week; because these Christian Generals pursue their vocation with special ardour on Sunday. The Christian denominations lament the bombardment of cathedrals; but the dominion of Satan has no need for those buildings. The Prince of Darkness is ruling this world, and the fact that he is being supported by all the self-styled "Vicars of Christ" simply proves that the latter have been masquerading under false colours.

Those editors who have been denouncing the German atrocities have not protested against the action of the Censor in refusing permission to publish the counter charges. This is most unfair procedure. Both sides' allegations should be allowed a hearing or should be suppressed—not one to the exclusion of the other.* Russia and Japan have been the subject of some

* Isaac D'Israeli, in his "Curiosities of Literature," has an essay on "Political Forgeries and Fictions," in which he shrewdly remarks: "When one nation is at war with another, there is no doubt that the two Governments connive at, and often encourage, the most atrocious libels on each other, to madden the people to preserve their independence and contribute cheerfully to the expenses of the war."

strictures by the ex-Press Censor, Mr. F. E. Smith, in his work on "International Law," which were to this effect: "On November 21st, 1894, the Japanese Army stormed Port Arthur, and for five days indulged in the promiscuous slaughter of non-combatants: men, women, and children, with every circumstance of barbarity." The *Times* correspondent reported: "Thursday, Friday, Saturday, and Sunday were spent by the soldiery in murder and pillage from dawn to dark, in mutilation, in every conceivable kind of nameless atrocity, until the town became a ghastly inferno, to be remembered with a fearsome shudder until one's dying day." Mr. F. E. Smith adds: "The details of this awful scene completely warrant this eloquent and emphatic condemnation." So much for the gentle Japanese. Next Mr. F. E. Smith details the record of the pastoral and simple Russian, as he is being now pictured by H. G. Wells and other *litterateurs*: "The recurrent tradition of Suvaroff's savagery at Ismail and Warsaw found a re-echo in the events of the Crimean War and of Akkel Teke, and culminated in 1900 in the cold-blooded slaughter by the Russians of the whole Chinese population of Blagovestchenk and district. . . . The massacre of Blagovestchenk was described by a Russian officer in the following words: 'The Cossacks took all the Chinese and forced them into the river on boats that could not carry them, and when the women threw their children on shore and begged that they at least might be saved the Cossacks caught the babies on their bayonets and cut them in pieces.' . . . Nothing worse than this massacre of Blagovestchenk has ever been related of the unspeakable Turk." That was Mr. Smith's judgment, writing in 1907, the very year in which Britain and Russia entered into a Treaty to undermine Persian independence! The "red rubber" denunciations of Belgium cannot have been forgotten; and the report of Sir Roger Casement on Belgian rule in the Congo Free State is still available to those who want to be sickened with the horror of man's "inhumanity to man." The International Commission on the atrocities in the Balkan War condemned the Servians as the worst offenders. Even now Belgium has not been laid waste as the Boer Republics were by Lord Kitchener and Lord Roberts. The sack of Pekin by the troops of the Allied Powers in 1900, in which Germany was equally involved, should lead the European statesmen to refrain from this sort of denunciation, until the Christian communities of Europe have offered some sort of reparation to the "Heathen Chinese" for the abominations which disgraced that punitive expedition.

This war is being supported by sham arguments and hypocritical appeals to sentiment. Its pretended cause, "the neutrality of Belgium," is non-existent. Its real cause, the wish to beat the German Navy, remains to be examined. On the face of it, it would seem a convenient opportunity to annihilate the German Navy; but surface considerations are not always the

soundest. Just let us examine the amazing procedure adopted by the statesmen of Britain to preserve Britain's predominance in sea power. The French Fleet, with some British ships, is at present guarding the Mediterranean trade routes in the interests of the trade of France. The Russian Fleet is stationed in the Baltic, the Black Sea, and the Far East; its inactivity is distinctly masterly. Britain has marshalled the whole active strength of the Navy in or about the North Sea so as to strike at the German High Seas Fleet should it venture upon a general battle. As the German Fleet is hopelessly inferior in ships and guns to the British Fleet, its big ships are not likely to risk a general engagement; but its submarines and torpedo boats will make desperate sorties. Notwithstanding Mr. Churchill's reference to "rats in a hole," the Germans are sensible to adopt on sea the tactics followed by the Boers on land. Assuming, however, that public opinion in Germany puts pressure on the German Admiral to endeavour to fight his way out of the Kiel Canal, there may be a titanic sea fight in which the German Fleet would be destroyed and the British Fleet somewhat damaged. Then, at the end of the war, what would be the position in the realm of sea power? Germany's Fleet would have been annihilated; Britain's Fleet would have been damaged; the French Fleet would be peacefully patrolling the Mediterranean; and the Russian, Italian, Japanese, and American Fleets would be intact. The Austrian Fleet will, in all probability, remain in Pola Harbour, which is practically impregnable, as Austria, having no quarrel with either France or Britain, can have no particular wish to jeopardise her small Fleet in combat with the Mediterranean squadrons of Britain and France. The whole burden of contending with the German Fleet has been cast upon Britain. What is the economy or the sanity of this policy, which may leave Britain's Fleet inferior in strength to the combined naval forces of any two of the Powers named?

No statesman in Europe has explained definitely what the objective of any country participating in the war really is. The British ruling class is united upon some undisclosed policy; because the arguments that are being expounded in the recruiting speeches simply disappear on the first touch of criticism. The road is a road to ruin; that is clear.* By reason of the stupid tactics of European policy, the Germans and Austrians, actuated by their terror of Russian barbarism sweeping across their country, will be reinforced by the nerving spirit of desperation. The cruel measures enforced in Belgium are good evidence of the serious terror prevailing in the German mind. Cruelty is always a symptom of fear; and it needs a brave man to be merciful to his enemies; and that is true of nations. Germany and Austria are in graver peril than any other country except Belgium; because

*Lord Charles Beresford calculated in 1911 that a successful war against Germany would cost Britain £1,200,000,000!—(*Parliamentary Debates*.)

their trade has gone, and their armies have had no tremendous success except in East Prussia over the Russians. The conclusions which look probable are: (1) stale-mate; (2) victory and aggrandisement of France and Russia over Germany and Austria-Hungary. Such a policy is not worth a single British life. It is a mad world; but there is not even method in the madness which is afflicting Britain and her statesmen at this time of crisis in the history of civilisation. On these grounds, the Government should be compelled to answer on the reassembling of Parliament the plain question: What are we doing and where are we going in this bitter contest? The militarism prevalent in Prussia is a form of militarism which is formidable, inexcusable, and immoral in its denial of the rights of the individual; but it is impossible to measure the ebb and flow of enmity between nations. The bitterness of militaristic Germany against the loose combination of the Triple *Entente* inevitably produced an unrest of fear which, once it was inflamed by the Russian attitude towards Austria, caused universal terror to develop into universal murder.

The events of the past few weeks, which have staggered Europe with the rapidity of their occurrence, have produced, one must recognise, a complete paralysis of democratic government in Britain, since Parliament was prorogued leaving many matters of vast public importance wholly undebated. (1) The intervention of Japan in a conflict between European States. It is true that this intervention was engineered during a temporary adjournment and was an accomplished fact when Parliament reassembled; yet it was a question of the utmost moment. No protest was raised in Parliament against its withdrawal by Sir Edward Grey from the cognisance of Parliament; nor was any censure moved upon him. (2) The use of ferocious Asiatic troops, such as the Gurkhas, against a European State in Europe. (3) The sending of the Expeditionary Force on to the Continent was never discussed. Sir Edward Grey told the House of Commons on 3rd August, "that no decision had been yet come to with regard to sending an expeditionary force." Then came the declaration of war against Germany, and the Government was allowed to send thousands of men to perish on the Continent without a word of debate on the wisdom of such a proceeding. (4) The Treaty between Russia, France, and Britain, whereby those Powers have agreed not to make terms of peace separately, was withheld from discussion in the House of Commons. No hint was given by Sir Edward Grey of his intention to bind Britain's future by such an instrument; Sir Edward Grey is the autocrat of Britain. Even when the document was published, the principle of pledging Britain to an agreement of that nature with Russia, whose ambitions have been a potent influence in bringing on the catastrophe, was not even debated or discussed. It is doubtful whether any British statesman has ever concluded a more momentous bargain which may have most unforeseen consequences on the future of Britain.

Parliament has neglected to extract any information as to the lengths the Governmental policy, whatever it may be, will be pushed, nor is it comprehensible why the Belgian Government, now a belligerent, was not a signatory to this covenant of loyalty and good faith. If these points are all considered as improper for public debate, one must wonder what utility democratic control through Parliament is as a check upon a war-infected executive, which is working the governmental machinery at full speed. All that can happen at the present rate of progress is that Britain will be turned into a mourning house, Europe into a cemetery, and the world into a bankruptcy court. Let us reflect upon some passages in Mr. John Bright's speeches. On 31st March, 1854, in denouncing the Crimean War, he said: "It is not my duty to make this country the knight errant of the human race, and to take upon herself the protection of the thousand millions of human beings who have been permitted by the Creator of all kings to people this planet." Ah! those of us who ask for a little knight errantry on behalf of the down-trodden millions of British workers know the answer that is given by those who are willing to expend billions on preserving "the neutrality of Belgium." The wealthy capitalists, whose wives are generously crowding to succour the Belgian refugees, will be unremitting in their grinding of the faces of the British working class, and that class will go on applauding their patriotic zeal and self-sacrifice! Ah! is not it tragically ironical? For instance, the soldier's widow is to receive 5s. a week and 1s. 6d. for each child. Indeed! this is a noble country, with a generous heart in the way of promises! The first duty of Britons is to remedy the wrongs of Britons and to end the scandalous poverty which is the outstanding feature in these islands. When the call goes that "England expects every man to do his duty," in that respect will there be a hearty response from the ruling class of Britain? Mr. Bright resumed: "I am told, indeed, that the war is popular, and that it is foolish and eccentric to oppose it. I may ask, what was more popular than the American War? Where is now the popularity of that disastrous and disgraceful war, and who is the man to defend it? . . . The past events of our history have taught me that the intervention of this country in European wars is not only unnecessary but calamitous." How true that is of the present war! The ruin of Austria and Germany for the advantage of Russia and France can be nothing but immediately disastrous to Britain. Mr. Bright concluded: "I believe if this country seventy years ago had adopted the principle of non-intervention in every case where her interests were not directly and obviously assailed, that she would have been saved from much of the pauperism and brutal crimes by which our Government and people have alike been disgraced. This country might have been a garden, every dwelling might have been of marble, and every person who treads its soil might have been sufficiently educated. We should

indeed have had less of military glory. We might have had neither Trafalgar nor Waterloo, but we should have set the high example of a Christian nation, free in its institutions, courteous and just in its conduct towards all foreign States, and resting its policy on the unchangeable foundation of Christian morality."

That also is the creed of the author of this pamphlet. One last word of warning. Remember that no time is too soon to confer upon society the blessings of peace. The Government has pursued a course which has brought Britain into war with Austria against whom nobody has discovered a *casus belli*. The intervention of the United States, of Turkey, and China may light another conflagration, which will burn out the remnants of social organisation at present left untouched by the appalling struggle in Europe. It is possible that the practical blockade of Holland will drive that country into war with Britain. It is probable that the victorious march of Russia will compel Sweden, which is organising an army of 800,000 men, to enter the field against the Allies. Then, Britain will be arrayed against the most civilised and enlightened people in Europe. Once the path of crime is begun no one can foresee where the traitor will end. There is a gallows which overhangs national crimes as well as individual crimes, and that these proceedings of H.M. Government, if persisted in, will bring a most frightful retribution, is a lesson written on the bloodstained pages of nearly every war that the British democracy has been deluded into, most of which have been embarked upon in the hope of rivetting the chains of privilege still more tightly round the wrists of the hardworking, underpaid mass of British citizens.

God Save the People!

APPENDIX.

THE RUSSIAN PLOT AGAINST EUROPE.

So much prejudice has been excited by the circulation of the books and opinions of unofficial German writers like Treitschke, Von Bernhardi, Von Clausewitz, Harden, and others, that one might imagine that Germany was the only country possessing writers advocating nefarious designs for the expansion of their Empire. The document printed below is the Russian plan of campaign against the liberties of Europe; and it is differentiated from the Bernhardi suggestions in that the latter have not been carried out in any way, while the former is daily being acted upon. The French financial oligarchy has a heavy responsibility, in that it is the moneybags of the French Banks that have financed the Russian Government up to this last crowning feat of embroiling the whole of Europe.

This political testament of Peter the Great is taken from Mr. A. R. Colquhoun's translation (in his book "Russia Against India") of the version published by M. Lésur in "Des Progrès de la Puissance Russe" in 1812. Once the military power of Germany and Austria-Hungary is destroyed, what rampart can be erected against the complete fulfilment of the sinister designs attributed to Russia in this remarkable State paper, which has been known for a century and a half as "The Will of Peter the

Great"? Its authenticity as a "will" has been challenged, but there is no doubt that the instrument has been in circulation about 150 years.

The sections are divided up as follows:—

"(i.) Neglect nothing which can introduce European manners and customs into Russia, and with this object gain the co-operation of the various Courts, and especially the learned men of Europe, by means of interesting speculations, by philanthropical and philosophical principles, or by any other suitable means." The Russians have not been very successful in that.

"(ii.) Maintain the State in a condition of perpetual war, in order that the troops may be inured to warfare, and so that the whole nation may always be kept in training and ready to march at the first signal.

"(iii.) Extend our dominion by every means on the north along the Baltic, as well as towards the south along the shores of the Black Sea; and for this purpose

"(iv.) Excite the jealousy of England, Denmark, and Brandenburg against the Swedes, by means of which these Powers will disregard any encroachments we may make on that State, and which we will end by subjugating." A good deal of that policy has been carried into effect. What chance Sweden has of preserving her independence against a victorious Russia would require an historical genius to calculate, once the German military power has been crushed.

"(v.) Interest the House of Austria in the expulsion of the Turk from Europe, and under this pretext maintain a permanent army and establish dockyards on the shores of the Black Sea, and thus, by ever moving forward, we will eventually reach Constantinople." That scheme is rapidly approaching fruition, notwithstanding the past watchfulness of Britain and Germany.

"(vi.) Keep up a state of anarchy in Poland, influence the national assemblies, and, above all, regulate the election of its kings; split it up on every occasion that presents itself and finally subjugate it." That policy has been completed.

"(vii.) Enter into a close alliance with England, and maintain direct relations with her by means of a good commercial treaty; allow her even to exercise a certain monopoly in the interior of the State, so that a good understanding may be by degrees established between the English merchants and sailors and ours, who on their part are to favour everything which tends to perfect and strengthen the Russian Navy, by aid of which it is necessary to at once strive for mastery over the Baltic and in the Black Sea—the keystone on which the speedy success of the scheme depends." This has been, in exact detail, the policy of the last seven years.

"(viii.) Bear in mind that the commerce of India is the commerce of the world, and that he who can exclusively command it is dictator of Europe. No occasion should therefore be lost to provoke war with Persia, to hasten its decay, to advance on the Persian Gulf, and then to endeavour to re-establish the ancient trade of the Levant through Syria." This, also, has been steadily developed as the Russian policy since Persia was divided into "spheres of influence."

"(ix.) Always interfere, either by force of arms or by intrigue, in the quarrels of the European Powers, and especially in those of Germany, and with this object

"(x.) Seek after and maintain an alliance with Austria, encourage her in her favourite idea of national predominance, profit by the slightest ascendancy gained over her to entangle her in disastrous wars, so that she may be gradually weakened; even help her sometimes"—that is a sardonic touch—"but incessantly stir up against her the enmity of the whole of Europe, but particularly of Germany, by rousing the jealousy and distrust of the German princes.

"(xi.) Always select wives for Russian princes from among the

German princesses, so that by this multiplying alliances based on close relationship and mutual interest we will increase our influence over that empire.

"(xii.) Make use of the power of the Church over the disunited and schismatical Greeks who are scattered over Hungary, Turkey, and the southern parts of Poland; gain them over by every possible means; pose as their protectors, and establish a claim to religious supremacy over them. Under this pretext, and with their help, Turkey will be conquered, and Poland, unable any longer to stand alone, either by its own strength or by means of political connections, will voluntarily place itself in subjection to us." A considerable portion of that objective has been attained.

"(xiii.) From that time, every moment will be precious to us. All our batteries must be secretly prepared to strike the great blow, and so that they can strike with such order, precision, and rapidity as to give Europe no time for preparation. The first step will be to propose very secretly, and with the greatest circumspection, first to the Court of Versailles and then to that of Vienna, to divide with one of them the empire of the world; and by mentioning that Russia is virtually ruler of the Eastern World, and has nothing to gain but the title, this proposal will probably not arouse their suspicion. It is undoubted that this project cannot fail to please them, and war will be kindled between them, which will soon become general, both on account of the connections and widespread relationships between these two rival Courts and natural enemies, and because of the interests which will compel the other Powers of Europe to take part in the struggle." Treitschke, Von Clausewitz, Bernhardi, and all the other fire-eating Germans seem rather colourless in their petty designs of pan-Germanism compared with the schemer who propounded these plans.

"(xiv.) In the midst of this general discord, Russia will be asked for help, first by one and then by another of the belligerent Powers; *and having hesitated long enough to give them time to exhaust themselves, and to enable her to assemble her own armies*"—which is exactly what is happening at this moment, though the motive may not be similar—"she will at last appear to decide in favour of the House of Austria, and, while she pushes her irregular troops forward to the Rhine, she will at once follow them up with the hordes of Asia, and as they advance into Germany two large fleets filled with a portion of the same hordes must set sail, one from the Sea of Azoff and the other from the port of Archangel, under convoy of war vessels from the Black Sea and the Baltic. They will suddenly appear in the Mediterranean and Northern Ocean, and inundate Italy, Spain, and France with these fierce and rapacious nomads, who will plunder a portion of the inhabitants, carry off others into slavery to re-people the deserts of Siberia, and render the remainder incapable of escaping from our yoke. All these distractions will afford such great opportunities to the regular troops that they will be able to act with a degree of energy and precision which will ensure the subjugation of Europe."

A study of this ingenious and elaborate design does not reconcile one to the rumble of the marching millions of Cossacks. The real issue in this disastrous conflict is not the one which has been stated over and over again, namely that German militarism is a menace to Europe; but rather the problem is, is not German militarism, unpleasant as its attitude and atmosphere may be, a necessary protection against the Russian tide, which has been rising, rapidly and steadily, against European civilisation since 1879? The persons who desire to see the destruction of Germany's power on land would reconcile one to their point of view if they explained how any Power could oppose the carrying into operation of all the unfulfilled part of the schemes elaborated above, once German militarism has been crushed.

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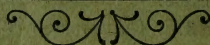
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